



PRESS RELEASE

Child Predator Sentenced to 63 Years in Prison

June 14, 2021

Michael Todd Austin, 51, was sentenced to 63 years in prison by a Brazos County jury Friday night. Austin faced a punishment range of 5 years' probation up to Life in prison for criminal acts which began in 1993. Kyle Hawthorne was the judge presiding over the trial.

In March of 2018, the victim, who was in his late 30's disclosed for the first time that he had been sexually abused when he was a child. Austin, who was 23 years old in 1993 and a trusted family friend, abused the victim for more than four years. Austin was a student at Texas A&M University at the time and was involved in youth ministry at a local church.

After the disclosure, the victim received counseling and further disclosed that he believed others may have been abused by Austin. Investigators located another victim who also testified at Austin's trial.

In 1998, Austin pled guilty to a separate charge of Indecency with a Child in Brazos County for fondling another victim while working at Los Hermanos Boys Ranch. Austin was given deferred adjudication for that charge. At the time of the 1998 disclosure, authorities were still unaware of Austin's 1993 victims. Austin later moved to Tyler, Texas and then Vermont.

At trial, the victim testified about difficulties he faced coming forward and the devastating effects on his life as a result of years sexual abuse he experienced as a child. He also testified how Austin groomed him both prior to and during the abuse. As a result of the abuse, the victim has faced years of drug abuse, as well as serving time in prison.

Tammy Thomas and Brian Price prosecuted this case on behalf of the State of Texas.

